

Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-05 DRC-01 /102 W
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R 042045Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4429

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 6446

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BL

SUBJ: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MNR LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

REF: LA PAZ 6356

1. SUMMARY: IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE DIVIDED MNR NATIONAL CONVENTION (SEE REFTTEL, THE GOB HAS ACCEPTED THE LEADERSHIP CLAIMS OF THE RUBEN JULIO FACTION OF THAT PARTY. GUILLERMO FORTUN, LEADER OF THE FACTION OPPOSING JULIO, RESIGNED HIS POST AS PRESIDENT OF THE BANCO DEL ESTADO OCTOBER 2 AND APPEARS TO BE TEMPORARILY IN POLITICAL ECLIPSE. HOWEVER, FORTUN'S CLAIMS CONTINUE TO BE ADVANCED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF MNR LABOR. END SUMMARY.

2. AS THE DUST SETTLED IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE MNR'S XXITH NATIONAL CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 27-30, BOTH RUBEN JULIO AND GUILLERMO FORTUN PRESSED THEIR RIVAL CLAIMS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THE OFFICIAL CHIEF OF THAT POLITICAL PARTY. AFTER THE FAILURE OF INITIAL MEDICATION EFFORTS SPONSORED BY PRESIDENT BANZER, THE GOVERNMENT GAVE TACIT RECOGNITION TO THE RUBEN JULIO FACTION OF THE MNR BY INVITING JULIO AND HIS CHIEF SUBORDINATES TO A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (CONAPOL), AN ORGAN OF THE SUPRA-PARTY FPN COALITION. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE FPN GAVE FURTHER SIGNS OF OFFICIAL SUPPORT FOR JULIO BY ANNOUNCING THAT IT NO LONGER RECOGNIZED THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MNR'S COCHABAMBA
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DEPARTMENT COMMAND, WHICH HAD BACKED THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN OF

FORTUN AT THE MNR CONVENTION.

3. THE FLAGGING POLITICAL FORTUNES OF FORTUN WERE A MOTIVATING FACTOR IN HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE PRESIDENCY OF THE BANCO DEL ESTADO ON OCTOBER 2, AT WHICH TIME FORTUN ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD DEVOTE HIMSELF EXCLUSIVELY TO PARTY AFFAIRS. NONETHELESS, TWO OF FORTUN'S CLOSET SUPPORTERS: THE CHIEF OF THE MNR'S NATIONAL LABOR COMMAND, JUAN SANJINES OBANDO, AND SUBSECRETARY OF LABOR JORGE ESPANS, ISSUED APPEALS FOR THE RE-UNIFICATION OF THEIR BADLY-DIVIDED PARTY. SANJINES AND ESPANA FORMULATED A PROPOSAL THAT THE LABOR COMMAND TAKE OVER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY UNTIL A NEW CONVENTION COULD MEET, WITH HINTS FROM SANJINES THAT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE NOT ACCEPTED THEN MNR LABOR MIGHT FORCIBLY TAKE OVER THE PARTY'S NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN LA PAZ. IN RESPONSE, RUBEN JULIO REJECTED THESE INITIATIVES OUTRIGHT, WHILE ANNOUNCING THAT HE WOULD PRESENT NAMES OF MNR MILITANTS TO THE GOB AS REPLACEMENTS FOR BOTH FORTUN AND ESPANA IN THEIR OFFICIAL POSTS. JULIO'S POSITION WAS FURTHER FORTIFIED ON OCTOBER 3 WHEN THE MNR'S NATIONAL PROFESSIONALS COMMAND ANNOUNCED ITS SUPPORT FOR HIS LEADERSHIP.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, PARTY ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAPAZ06446
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740283-0097
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741073/aaaackba.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LA PAZ 6356
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MNR LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE
TAGS: PINT, BL, MNR, (JUIO, RUBEN), (FORTUN, GUILLERMO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005